MARVEL LIMITED SERIES

PSR 1 of 6

MILLIGAN

ROBERTSON

RAMOS

FIRST CAME VENOM®, THEN CAME CARNAGE®, NOW COMES...

TOXIN

THE NEW AVENGERS® TIE-IN

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New York City

MY CITY HAS CHANGED A LOT SINCE I BECAME A COP. THERE WAS THAT TERRIBLE SEPTEMBER DAY, AFTER WHICH NOTHING COULD EVER BE THE SAME AGAIN.

AND MORE RECENTLY, THE MASS BREAKOUT FROM *THE RAFT* AT *RYKER'S ISLAND* MEANS THE PLACE IS SWARMING WITH ESCAPED CONVICTS. SUPER-POWERED FREAKS LIKE *THIS* YO-YO, *KING COBRA.**

ALL THE USUAL *COSTUMED HEROES* ARE INVOLVED IN ROUNDING THESE CHARACTERS UP, ALONG WITH THE REGULAR POLICE FORCE.

AND ONE GUY WHO JUST RECENTLY *WALKED OUT* ON THE REGULAR POLICE FORCE.

YOURS TRULY.

TOXIN: the DEVIL you KNOW

PART ONE: the STRANGE CASE OF PAT MULLIGAN AND MR. hyde

*SEE NEW AVENGERS #1

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OH, ANGEL, THE DIAMONDS ARE PERFECT. IN THESE FACETS I SEE THE VERY WONDERS OF INFINITY.

IN OTHER WORDS, I *LOVE* THEM.

I'M JUST THE *COURIER GIRL*, MR. KLEIN. YOU CAN LOVE THEM, HATE THEM OR BE INDIFFERENT, FOR ALL I CARE.

KRASHHHH

OH MY!

THAK

GNNNN

OKAY, BEAUTIFUL, PUT THE MERCHANDISE IN THE BAG, OR I SQUEEZE THE FAT GUY SO HARD YOU'LL SEE HIS SPLEEN POP OUT HIS MOUTH.

Y'KNOW, FOR SOMEONE SO CUTE, YOU GOT A DISGUSTING MOUTH.

I PLAN TO START MY SEARCH FOR KING COBRA IN A BUILDING FULL OF STALE HUMAN SWEAT AND MANIC GIBBERING.

BUT UNFORTUNATELY THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IS CLOSED, SO I COME *HERE* INSTEAD...

Ryker's Island Maximum Security Penitentiary

WHY SHOULD I HELP *YOU?*

YOU *HATE* KING COBRA.

I HATE *EVERYTHING.* THAT'S WHAT THIS PLACE *DOES* TO YOU.

KING COBRA COULD HAVE HELPED YOU ESCAPE FROM HERE. BUT HE LEFT YOU BEHIND TO *ROT. AGAIN.*

HELP US FIND HIM AND I'LL PUT IN A WORD WITH THE GUARDS. MAYBE MAKE YOUR LIFE A LITTLE *EASIER* IN HERE.

YOU KNOW, THEY'VE FIDDLED WITH THE *ELECTRIC PULSE* IN THIS *COLLAR*...INHIBITS MY *LIBIDO*... WHICH IN *THIS* PLACE, WITH *MY* NEIGHBORS, I CAN *LIVE* WITH.

PROBLEM IS...IT ALSO STOPS ME ASSUMING MY *TRUE FORM* OF *MR. HYDE.*

MR. HYDE ISN'T ACTUALLY YOUR *TRUE FORM.* MR. HYDE IS THE *BESTIAL SIDE* OF YOUR NATURE...

WE'VE *ALL* GOT A BESTIAL SIDE, OFFICER MULLIGAN. AND I'M VERY HAPPY WITH MINE.

HERE'S THE DEAL. I HELP YOU FIND *THE SNAKE,* AND YOU GET THE GUARDS TO TAKE THIS THING OFF.

HALF AN HOUR A DAY, THAT'S ALL. AT RECREATION PERIOD, SO I CAN BE *MR. HYDE.* I'LL DO SOME PAINTING. CREATIVE WRITING, THAT KINDA STUFF.

YOU'RE ACTUALLY GOING TO ASK THE WARDEN TO TAKE THAT THING OFF HIM?

SO HE CAN TURN INTO A SIX-FOOT-SIX MONSTER AND BEAT EVERYONE UP? *RIGHT.*

THE BRASS MUST HAVE BEEN CRAZY TO THINK THAT LUNATIC WOULD HELP US.

COME TO THINK OF IT, I MUST HAVE BEEN CRAZY TO ALLOW YOU TO COME WITH ME. IF THE SERGEANT FINDS OUT I BROUGHT YOU ALONG, HE'LL LOCK US *BOTH* UP IN THIS PLACE.

I TOLD YOU, I NEED TO KEEP *BUSY*, PAUL.

WHAT YOU *NEED* IS TO COME TO YOUR *SENSES*, PAT. GO BACK TO YOUR WIFE AND KID. START BEING A *COP* AGAIN.

INSTEAD OF *IMPERSONATING* ONE.

I STILL DON'T GET WHY YOU WALKED OUT ON EVERYTHING. AM I *MISSING* SOMETHING OR WHAT?

I'D LIKE TO EXPLAIN, PAUL. BUT IT'S *COMPLICATED.*

WARNING

POLICE

REALLY, REALLY *COMPLICATED.*

IT'S SIMPLE. I'M BORED. I WANT TO GO OUT.

BE QUIET. I'M TRYING TO READ.

DON'T CARE. I WANT TO GO OUT.

YOU CAN GO OUT LATER.

YOU MEAN WHEN IT'S DARK?

YES.

BECAUSE YOU'RE SCARED OF SOMEONE SEEING ME.

YEAH, I'M SCARED. YOU SCARE ME. THIS WHOLE WHACKED-OUT SITUATION SCARES ME.

I DIDN'T ASK TO BE BORN.

AND I DIDN'T ASK YOU TO CHOOSE ME AS YOUR HOST, TOXIN.

THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

THAT WASN'T MY CHOICE. MAYBE I COULD HAVE DONE BETTER. SOMEONE WITH A LITTLE MORE GET-UP-AND-GO.

I'M SORRY TO BE A DISAPPOINTMENT TO YOU.

WHY DID YOU KEEP YOUR POLICE UNIFORM WHEN YOU WALKED OUT ON YOUR JOB?

IT...IT MIGHT COME IN USEFUL.

YOU MEAN...YOU HAVE A SENTIMENTAL ATTACHMENT TO THE PAST THAT YOU JUST CAN'T BREAK?

JENNY'S

1396 RESTAURANT

BE QUIET!

SHE'LL BE HERE SOON.

SHE'S NEVER MORE THAN TEN MINUTES LATE.

I TELL MYSELF THIS ISN'T GOING TO HURT.

I TELL MYSELF THIS MUST GET EASIER. JUST LIKE I TOLD MYSELF THE LAST TIME. AND THE TIME BEFORE THAT.

AND I'M WRONG.

AGAIN.

EVERY DAY I PUT MYSELF THROUGH THIS. IT HURTS. BUT I *HAVE* TO SEE GINA AND THE BABY.

TOXIN CALLED IT A SENTIMENTAL ATTACHMENT THAT I CAN'T BREAK...

BUT WHAT I'M ABOUT TO DO IS A LONG WAY FROM SENTIMENTAL.

LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT... YOU WANT TO GO *BACK TO RYKER'S ISLAND?*

I WANT ANOTHER SHOT AT ZABO. AT *MR. HYDE.* I THINK I CAN GET *THROUGH* TO HIM THIS TIME.

POLICE

NYPD

PAT, YOU DON'T *GET THROUGH* TO THESE PEOPLE. THEY'RE ALL A BUNCH OF *WHACKJOBS.*

YOU DON'T HAVE TO COME. JUST ARRANGE IT FOR ME. MAKE A CALL. I'LL WEAR MY OLD UNIFORM.

WHICH, BY THE WAY, IS A *CRIMINAL OFFENSE!*

THIS IS THE ONLY WAY I CAN MAKE SENSE OF WALKING OUT ON GINA AND EDDIE. BY DOING *GOOD.* BY *USING* WHAT I'VE *BECOME.* MAYBE THAT STARTS BY BRINGING IN *KING COBRA.*

USING WHAT YOU'VE BECOME? WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON WITH YOU, MULLIGAN?

OKAY. I'LL TELL YOU. BUT YOU GOTTA PROMISE ON EVERYTHING YOU HOLD DEAR...TO TELL *NO ONE.*

OH MY GOD, I *KNEW* IT.

YOU'RE GAY.

I AM NOT! I'M A MARRIED MAN. WITH A KID.

SO WAS GERRY REUBEN FROM HOMICIDE. HE HAD *TWO* KIDS.

I'M *NOT,* MEADOWS.

YOU REMEMBER... YOU REMEMBER THOSE TWO MONSTERS, THOSE ALIEN SYMBIOTE MANIACS...*VENOM.* AND *CARNAGE?*

REMEMBER? I STILL HAVE NIGHTMARES. ANOTHER CHANCE FOR *SPIDER-MAN* TO SHOW US UP AS A BUNCH OF *IDIOTS...*

YOU KNOW HOW VENOM USED THAT GUY AS ITS HOST? AND THEN IT GAVE BIRTH TO *CARNAGE,* WHO ENTERED THAT *OTHER* GUY... *CLETUS KASADY.* A NASTIER PIECE OF WORK YOU WON'T SEE.

WE-ELL... CARNAGE GAVE BIRTH TO A CHILD. A *SYMBIOTE* CHILD CALLED *TOXIN.* AND TOXIN, LIKE I GUESS ALL SYMBIOTES, NEEDS A *HUMAN BODY* AS A *HOST.*

AND YOU'RE...THE HOST?

YEP.

NOT GAY?

NOPE.

YOU AGAIN?

I WANT TO TALK.

DON'T TELL ME. *KING COBRA.*

FIRST, I WANT TO TALK ABOUT...*DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE.*

A MUCH MISUNDERSTOOD BOOK.

I GUESS ALL THE BEST ONES ARE.

MY, AIN'T *WE* DEEP?

I WANT TO HELP YOU, CALVIN. IF I CAN, I MEAN...

THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN HELP ME IS BY GETTING ME OUT OF THIS PLACE. CAN YOU SWING THAT? HUH?

I WAS THINKING MORE ALONG THE LINES OF HELPING YOU...

...BE MORE AT *PEACE* WITH YOURSELF.

PEACE, SCHMEACE.

IF YOU THINK YOU CAN GET INSIDE MY HEAD WITH A LOAD OF PSYCHO-BABBLE, YOU'RE MISTAKEN, COP. THE ONLY THING *WRONG* WITH ME IS THAT I GOT *CAUGHT.*

YOU SAW THE BOOK MERELY AS A *BLUEPRINT*, TO HELP YOU TURN INTO A MONSTER.

I KNOW, BUT IT'S ALSO ABOUT GOOD AND EVIL. AS IN, GOOD IS BAD, AND EVIL IS GOOD.

IT'S MORE *COMPLEX* THAN THAT.

P-PEOPLE...EVEN *MR. HYDE*...MAYBE *SYMBIOTES*, AREN'T ALL GOOD OR ALL BAD. THEY HAVE THE POTENTIAL FOR BOTH. BUT...MAYBE IF YOU *TEACH* THEM, *ENCOURAGE* THEM...

SYMBIOTES? SORRY, PAL. YOU'VE LOST ME.

GUARD!

INTERVIEW'S OVER, COP. TIME TO TUCK INTO THE PIG-SWILL THAT MASQUERADES AS LUNCH 'ROUND HERE.

IF I WAS YOU, I'D READ THAT BOOK AGAIN. GOOD IS BAD, EVIL IS GOOD. IT'S ALL IN THERE.

HOLD UP! YOU WANTED SOMETHING ON *KING COBRA?*

TRY *THIS* ON FOR SIZE. HE *MOLTED* BEFORE HE SPLIT.

YOU'LL NEED A THICKER *SKIN* TO CATCH THE SNAKE MAN.

"BUT IN THE HANDS OF EDWARD HYDE, THEY SOON BEGAN TO TURN TOWARDS THE MONSTROUS...WHEN I WOULD COME BACK FROM THESE EXCURSIONS..."

"...I WAS OFTEN PLUNGED INTO A KIND OF WONDER AT MY VICARIOUS DEPRAVITY..."

BORING! WHAT'S WITH THE OLD-FASHIONED LINGO? CAN'T WE HAVE SOMETHING MORE RELEVANT TO TODAY?

I MEAN... HE NEVER SPELLS OUT WHAT ALL THESE MONSTROUS THINGS ARE THAT MR. HYDE DOES.

THAT'S THE ENTIRE POINT. MR. HYDE'S ACTIONS ARE--

HE'S CLOSE. REAL CLOSE.

WHO'S CLOSE?

WHOEVER'S SKIN THAT WAS.

Y-YOU'RE RIGHT. FEEL THOSE HAIRS RISING ON MY BACK?

TICKLES, DOESN'T IT?

I CAN SMELL IT. OH, I CAN *TASTE* IT. HE'S *CLOSE*. HOW DO I *KNOW* THIS?

WE KNOW...

OH GOD, WE KNOW.

I STOP THINKING NOW AND GIVE MYSELF UP TO THE HEART-RACING, BEAUTIFUL CRAZINESS OF IT...

IS THIS WHAT *HOUNDS* FEEL? CHASING DOWN A SCENT, PULLED BY MUSIC ONLY THEY CAN HEAR...

IS THIS HOW *DR. JEKYLL* FELT?

FREED FROM THE STRAIT-JACKET OF VICTORIAN RESPECTABILITY...

YOU GOIN'?

SOME OF US GOT TO WORK, COBRA-BABY.

I GOT PLENTY OF MONEY. HOW MUCH D'YOU NEED?

YOU THINK I DID THIS FOR *MONEY?*

DING DONG DING DONG

I THINK MONEY CAME INTO THE *EQUATION.*

OF COURSE, THERE WAS ALSO THE FABULOUS GLAMOUR AND DANGER THAT I REPRESENT. DANGER IS VERY SEXY TO SOME WOMEN.

AND THERE'S MY INFAMOUS *COBRA GRIP.*

MM HMM. THAT COBRA GRIP...

I TAKE IT YOU'RE NOT ROOM SERVICE?

WHO IS... UH...

GRRRR

GNFFFFF

THAT DIDN'T HURT, *UGLY*. MY BONES ARE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO BREAK. MY TISSUE DOESN'T TEAR.

I DON'T GET *HANGOVERS*, EITHER.

IT'S TRUE. I TRIED TO HURT HIM. CAN'T BE DONE.

SSSSS--- STAY AWAY FROM ME, UGLY. I'M *DANGEROUS*.

GAH!

YOU THINK THAT'S FAST?

I'LL SHOW YOU *FAST*...

I DON'T USUALLY WASTE THAT MOVE ON JUST ANYONE. BUT YOU'RE BIG AN' UGLY ENOUGH TO DESERVE THE ***BEST***.

UGGNN!

DON'T BLACK OUT. THIS IS *SO STUPID.*

I'M SO STUPID.

CHARGING RIGHT INTO *THIS*--

BEFORE I KNOW WHAT I'M EVEN *CAPABLE* OF.

SORRY, BABY. IT WAS FUN, BUT A GIRL'S GOTTA LIVE.

ANGEL! NO!

MY GOD.

I CAN FEEL MY BONES LEAVING THEIR SOCKETS. THE TISSUE STRETCHING...

BUT NO PAIN, EVEN WHEN IT FEELS THERE *SHOULD* BE.

THIS ACTUALLY FEELS GOOD. OBSCENELY, INEXPLICABLY--

GOOD

AAAAAGHHHHHHH!

OH OH OH OH

USED TO BE *LAWS* AGAINST THAT KINDA THING.

KRAFSH

ARGHH!

"ARGHH"? I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU COULDN'T BE HURT

I WAS EXAGGERATING A LITTLE. WHO THE HECK ARE YOU?

I'M PAT MU-

TOXIN.

I AM TOXIN.

NEVER HEARD OF YOU.

YOU HAVE NOW. WHEN YOU GET BACK TO RYKER'S YOU CAN SPREAD MY NAME

N.Y.P.D.
13
POLICE
YOU DON'T WANNA HANG AROUND AND GET THE GLORY?
I'M NOT DOING THIS FOR THE GLORY.
HMMM.
YOU WERE LUCKY; KING COBRA ALMOST KILLED US BOTH.
I KNOW, I KNOW.
YOU COULD SEE IT ALL?
SURE, I TOOK A KIND OF BACKSEAT. LET YOU TAKE OVER. I THOUGHT, BEING AN EX-COP, YOU WOULD HAVE HANDLED THINGS A LITTLE MORE INTELLIGENTLY.
LAY OFF, KID. THIS IS ALL NEW TO ME.

YOU SHOULD HAVE STEPPED BACK. LET ME HAVE A GO AT THE STEERING WHEEL.

I DON'T TRUST WHAT *YOU'D* DO. I CAN FEEL YOUR NASTY URGES. AS LONG AS *I'M* YOUR HOST, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO LEARN TO BOTTLE THEM UP.

IS THIS A PRIVATE CONVERSATION... OR MERELY THE LATTER STAGES OF PARANOID SCHIZOPHRENIA?

SPIDER-MAN!

IT'S BEEN A WHILE, PAT. SEEMS TIME FOR A LITTLE CHAT, WEBHEAD TO...WELL, WHATEVER YOU ARE THESE DAYS. BUT I DON'T LIKE HANGING 'ROUND POLICE STATIONS.

WANT A RIDE HOME?

TH-THANKS, BUT I GOT MY *OWN* MODE OF TRANSPORTATION.

GOOD. THEN FOLLOW ME.

DOES THE NAME *RAZOR-FIST* MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU, PAT?

LESSEE... AFTER THE AMPUTATION YOU H-HAD... PROSTHETIC HANDS FITTED?

YES.

TH-THEN...YOU *CHOSE*...YOU ACTUALLY *CHOSE* TO HAVE THEM *REMOVED*...AND REPLACED BY *THOSE THINGS?*

CORRECT.

TH-THIS IS THE PLACE I WAS TELLIN' YOU ABOUT.

IT'S DAMP. DARK. DESOLATE. IT REEKS OF STALE URINE AND VOMIT. A LINGERING ODOR OF LONELY DEATH.

YES, A MAN COULD FEEL AT HOME HERE.

THIS SUITE IS ALREADY OCCUPIED, BROTHER.

IT'S EVERY AMERICAN'S RIGHT TO DEFEND HIS OWN PROPERTY.

WE GONNA CHOP YOU UP AND FEED YOU TO THE *ALLIGATORS* THAT LIVE IN THE SEWERS, MAN.

ALLIGATORS? IN *MANHATTAN?*

I THOUGHT THAT WAS AN *URBAN LEGEND.*

AIEEEE--!

EXCUSE ME IF I'M A LITTLE... *BLUNT.*

OH-- OH, BUT TH-THAT'S *HORRIBLE.*

SSSHHHTT

AIRRREE!

AN OLD BANDAGE SOAKED THROUGH WITH DRIED BLOOD. DON'T ASK ME HOW I GOT IT.

THIS SHOULD BE ENOUGH FOR ME TO TRACK HIM. THOUGH IT'S PRETTY *DISGUSTING.*

YOU SURE YOU'RE UP FOR THIS? I WON'T THINK ANY LESS OF YOU IF YOU--

NO, NO. IT'D BE AN HONOR. I NEED TO KEEP BUSY. I WANT TO BE USEFUL. YOU KNOW, TO *SERVE.*

YEAH. WE ALL START OUT LIKE THAT.

AND THEN--?

BE CAREFUL WITH THIS GUY. I'D BRING HIM IN MYSELF BUT I'M UP TO MY EARS IN VILLAINS THESE DAYS...

HEY, I HANDLED *KING COBRA* OKAY...

"...HOW TOUGH CAN SOMEONE WITH *NO HANDS* BE?"

XIII

The Hand

E E M P I R